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Letter dated 10 October 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 6 October 2005, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex). I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

05-54779 (E) 141005

Annex

Letter dated 6 October 2005 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period 6 June to 31 August 2005 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jaap **de Hoop Scheffer**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 1510 (2003), the Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the eighth such report by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), covering the period from 6 June to 31 August 2005.

2. As at 30 August, ISAF total strength was 11,551 personnel from 26 NATO nations plus 309 from 11 non-NATO nations. The increase in troops is due to additional resources deployed as part of ISAF assistance, at the request of the Government of Afghanistan, to provide security for the National Assembly and provincial council elections on 18 September 2005.

II. Security situation

Security in the International Security Assistance Force area of operations

3. The overall threat assessment for Afghanistan remains unchanged. As expected, the arrival of summer has resulted in an increased level of activity of opposing militant forces. Further increases in isolated violent incidents are expected with the approach of the National Assembly and provincial council elections. Additionally, local and regional power struggles linked to the elections and the possible contesting of seats in the new parliament are a possibility. Crime and drug-related violence also continue to pose day-to-day threats to the overall security situation.

4. The ISAF Kabul area of operation remained relatively calm during the reporting period. Kabul remains the centre of gravity for both the Afghan Government and the international community. As such, Kabul city represents an environment rich in potential targets, and several attacks have taken place against military facilities and Western embassies.

5. The northern area of ISAF operations has been calm but unstable. Major security concerns are related to criminal activity and factional fighting. A split within the Jumbesh organization has increased factional tensions. Whether this event heralds the decline of regional power-broker influence or merely a change in leadership remains to be seen. In parts of the region, the Government of Afghanistan has few tools to enforce law and order, and reports of corruption among officials are high. No significant change in the overall security situation is assessed, although a slow and steady rise in criminal-related incidents is projected.

6. The western area of ISAF operations is calm and remains relatively free of terrorism and crime. The region has a low presence and influence of opposing militant forces, even if these forces use transportation routes and rely on refuges in Farah province. ISAF estimates that, in the future, the presence of opposing militant forces in the western region may continue to diminish. Conversely, tribal power brokers, criminal leaders and drug lords have always remained just below the

surface of the relatively peaceful regional security environment. Although the threat from illegal militias in the west will remain low, relative to most of Afghanistan, these forces continue to pose the second greatest risk to the regional security, behind drug-related and criminal threats.

Security outside the International Security Assistance Force area of operations

7. In the southern region of the country, where the situation remains tense, the presence and activity of opposing militant forces, especially the Taliban, is a significant cause for concern in terms of security and instability. The Pashtuns dominate the south and many tolerate the presence of opposing militant forces, while at the same time rivalries between tribes severely hamper overall cohesion and effectiveness. Improvised explosive devices and rockets are typical weapons used in this area, although an increasing number of direct attacks have occurred against Afghan security forces and against forces of the United States-led Coalition.

8. In the eastern region of the country, which is also unstable, the presence and activity of opposing military forces is high. The proximity of the Pakistan border offers these forces manpower, material and refuge. While cross-border mobility has been hindered by Coalition and Pakistani-led anti-terrorism operations, opposing militant forces are still able to find shelter in the Afghan-Pakistan border area. Fundamental extremism with its manifestations may continue to exist in areas in the east. During the election period, further destabilization activities are expected in this region. Propaganda, rocket attacks, improvised explosive devices and the occasional suicide bomber may remain the main weapons used by the opposing militant forces.

International Security Assistance Force operations

9. ISAF took on responsibility for security assistance for Region West on 1 June 2005 in the provinces of Badghis, Farah, Ghor and Herat. Italy assumed lead-nation responsibility for the provisional reconstruction team in Herat. The United States has retained its provisional reconstruction team in Farah and transferred command responsibilities to NATO. Spain has established a provisional reconstruction team in Qala-e-Now, Badghis. Lithuania has established a provisional reconstruction team in Chagcharan, Ghor. To support these provisional reconstruction teams, Spain and Italy have established a Forward Support Base at the Herat city airfield. Overall regional coordination is provided by Italy.

10. NATO has provided additional forces to ensure a safe and secure environment for the National Assembly and provincial council elections scheduled for 18 September (see para. 15).

Security sector reform

11. Japan has coordinated the funding for and the international community's engagement in the disarmament and demobilization process, which officially ended on 7 July. The reintegration process has been planned and partially funded to continue until 30 June 2006. As at 10 August 2005, 63,800 Afghan militia forces have disarmed, 60,131 have demobilized and 58,560 have either begun or completed reintegration. Heavy weapons cantonment registers a total of 10,888 heavy weapons cantoned so far. The heavy weapons cantonment process is set to continue in Panjsher with the overall figure of 99 per cent of all known heavy weapons disabled

or cantoned to date. Emphasis has now shifted on implementing a country-wide programme of disarming illegal armed groups.

12. In terms of judicial reform, Italy has started a dialogue with the three main judicial institutions (Ministry of Justice, Office of the Attorney-General and the Supreme Court) in order to explain the need for the various aspects of the reform. The training of judicial officers in the provinces has proceeded successfully. It is currently being carried out in Herat. Four hundred fifty justice operators were trained under the aegis of the Interim Training Programme for the Afghan Judiciary. Twenty-five of those trainees proceeded to train 150 justice operators during phase I of the Provincial Justice Initiative. The United Kingdom has set up a criminal justice task force, which has trained judicial operators to hear counter-narcotics cases in Kabul, with 65 cases having been brought forward leading to 15 convictions and sentencing ranging from three to nine years. President Karzai has also signed a decree to allow court cases outside Kabul.

13. The Government of Afghanistan is also launching a 10-year strategic plan entitled "Justice for all", although Italy has submitted to the Afghan authorities a separate three-year plan. Talks are ongoing between the two parties in order to merge the two plans. Drafting of statutory law continues. At the provisional reconstruction team level, ISAF continues to provide provincial judicial data collection and supports promulgation of judicial information.

14. In the construction field, a multifunctional building (which will house courtrooms, a court of appeal, offices of the Attorney-General, etc.) has been built in Herat. The restructuring of the Security Court has started in Kabul. A piece of land in Kabul has been donated to build an open correctional centre for children. The United Nations Children's Fund will be involved in the construction of this building under the supervision and with the funding of Italy.

III. Support to the Afghan Government and to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

15. The main focus for ISAF will be the support to the National Assembly and provincial councils election process. ISAF will exercise its response and coordination capabilities in joint exercises with the Joint Electoral Management Board, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Combined Joint Forces Command in early September. ISAF will also deploy for exercises with the Election Support Force to verify procedures and enhance security through visibility and presence operations This strategy is intended to reassure voters and deter interference. In addition, ISAF will conduct area security activities in support of the Afghanistan National Army and Afghanistan National Police, as was the case during the presidential elections. Finally, ISAF will maintain its increased troop numbers until the end of the vote counting process in October.

16. The Afghan Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and the British Embassy have announced significant progress in counter-narcotic operations with a number of successful interdiction operations against drug traffickers. Coordination of all players in this respect has improved. As outlined in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report, there has been a significant drop in poppy cultivation levels in 2005 (down from 131,000 hectares in 2004 to 104,000

hectares this year; a fall of 21 per cent). In terms of cultivation eradication, around 5,100 hectares, or 5 per cent of the total crop, have been eradicated.

17. During the reporting period there were a number of successful interdiction operations by the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) and the National Interdiction Unit (part of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan). For the first time, the ASNF deployed in two provinces simultaneously. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics moved into its new building, allowing for much-needed expansion of its staffing and capacity levels. It also launched its pre-planting information campaign with support from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Kabul International Airport

18. An initial strategic assessment of ISAF air operations up to 2015 has been prepared identifying airfields, air capabilities and air infrastructure required for ISAF to continue its mission in the medium to long term. However, NATO's firm intention is to hand over the entire responsibility for Kabul International Airport to the Afghan authorities in the longer term. To this end, a clearing house mechanism was set up to find synergies and coordinate efforts for the rehabilitation of Afghan airspace management.

19. NATO support to Kabul International Airport operations continues with Afghan firefighters completing training and currently on duty. Initial selection of Afghan civilian air traffic controller trainees is complete, as training is about to be initiated. Denmark has deployed a temporary solution by providing a radar to enhance situational awareness for controllers at Kabul International Airport, although this radar will need to be replaced by a permanent civilian air traffic control certified radar.

IV. Conclusion

20. ISAF continues to fulfil its United Nations mandate to support the Government of Afghanistan in the creation of a safe and secure environment.

21. Building on the successful experience during ISAF's support to the presidential elections, forces are being prepared to support the National Assembly and provincial council elections in support of the core Bonn Agreement objectives.